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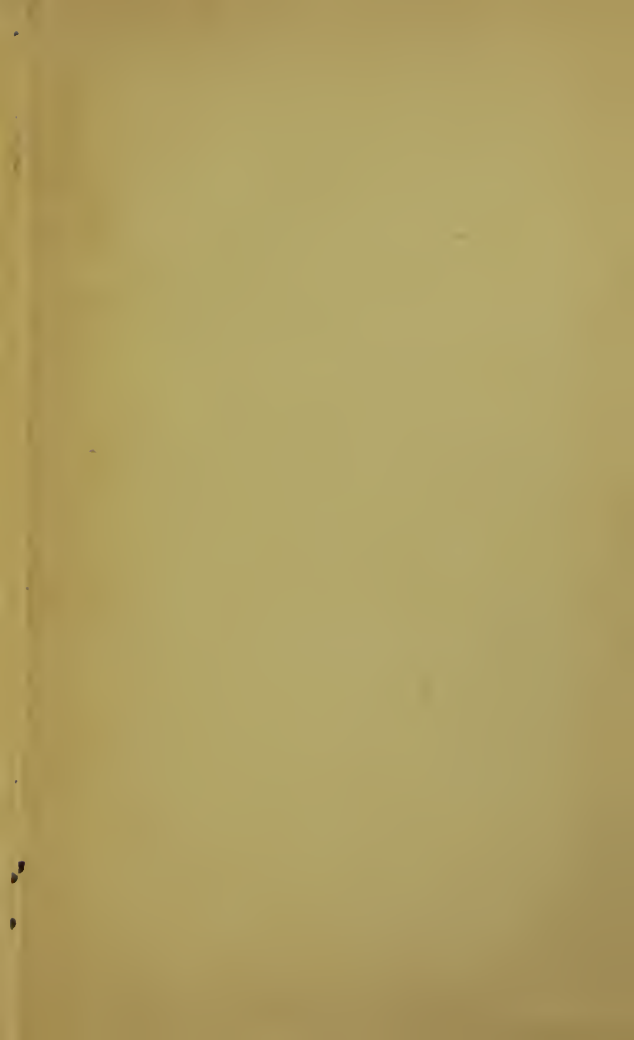
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THE CHRISTIAN PHYSICIAN;

OR,

REASONS WHY THE PHYSICIAN

SHOULD

BE A FOLLOWER OF CHRIST.

BY WOLCOTT RICHARDS, M. D.

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## PREFACE.

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HAVING, during an arduous and extensive practice of more than thirty years, done almost nothing by means of the press to advance the interests of medical science, I desire to make some slight amends for past delinquences, by addressing a few thoughts to my professional brethren upon a topic of far greater interest than any human science.

Should these thoughts, by the blessing of God, reach any heart, I shall feel as if I had not lived in vain—as if I had rendered a service infinitely more valuable than though I had written the most learned treatise, or had added ever so largely to the sum of human knowledge.

I have chosen the epistolary form of address, as best adapted to direct, free, and familiar appeal.

If any thing in these letters looks like an attempt to teach others wiser than myself, it is only seeming. I utterly disclaim such presumption. My design is not to impart knowledge,

but to point out some of the most important bearings of what is familiarly known.

To medical students and young men just entering the profession, it may seem that a dark and discouraging picture has been drawn of the future which awaits them. But they need not be disheartened. They must remember I have only alluded to the *trials* of the profession. To portray its *pleasures* would require much larger space, and constitute a work far more grateful to both author and reader. The physician who enters upon professional duties with a just appreciation of their magnitude and dignity, with a thorough knowledge of the elementary principles of his art, with a genuine love of science, and with the primary philanthropic motive of doing his utmost to alleviate human suffering, will derive from it, with all the drawbacks, much pure, elevated enjoyment.

Next to the office of the sacred ministry, it is the most godlike calling; and he who pursues it not as a trade, but as a noble, beneficent vocation, will ordinarily be successful in curing the sick, relieving the suffering, and comforting the afflicted, and thus will reap rich compensation for his many sacrifices and privations.

# THE CHRISTIAN PHYSICIAN.

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## LETTER I.

### INFLUENCE OF MEDICAL STUDIES.

IN opening a correspondence with you, my dear doctor, upon a subject of transcendent importance, involving no less than your happiness in this life as well as that which is to come, I would beforehand bespeak your kind and indulgent attention to what I have to say, and ask you, instead of passing lightly and hastily over my letters, to give them a careful and serious perusal, weighing the momentous considerations they present with the same frankness and candor you would bring to the discussion of matters of strictly professional or scientific interest.

I will not trespass upon your valuable time by speaking of the general subject of the internal and external evidences of Christianity;

merely recommending to you, if perchance you have not already read them, the invaluable works of Bishop Wilson, Bishop McIlvaine, and others, which array before the mind a weight of testimony seemingly irresistible upon a subject of such infinite importance that, in comparison with it, all questions of science, literature, or art sink into the veriest trifles. Upon all of us who live under the light of the gospel rests the responsibility of examining this testimony, and of boldly rejecting its claims to our confidence, or else manfully assenting to truths we cannot gainsay, and yielding obedience to precepts so authoritatively proclaimed. Upon this point I will not dwell, but with your permission I wish to suggest some reasons why you, as a physician, are under special obligations to be a religious man.

And the first reason I will offer is, because *your pursuits and studies lead you directly from nature up to nature's God*; the contemplation of his wonderful works almost necessarily leading the mind to the great Author and Creator himself. However the superficial observer may flippantly repudiate a great First-cause, and refer all the works and phenomena of nature to

mere chance, the medical man, studying the anatomy and physiology of the human body—revealing with his scalpel and microscope the delicate organization of the various parts, and beholding the admirable adaptation of each for its destined office, cannot fail to discover a design in each and all which involves the necessity of an all-wise Designer. Who of us, for instance, can contemplate any of the important functions of the human system, performed by means of mechanism the most intricate, and moved by vital influences the most subtle, without the conviction being forced upon him that no fortuitous combination of atoms could have produced such perfection—that no agency of blind chance could have wrought out such results? May I not ask you, my dear doctor, to call to mind some of the physiological phenomena, which, from their familiarity and constant recurrence, scarcely awaken a thought, yet which evince a skill in contrivance far surpassing created wisdom, and a niceness of adaptation which precludes the hypothesis of accidental combination, and see if they do constrain you to admit a divine Creator. Recall, for instance, the familiar process of digestion, from the moment

when, at the suggestion of appetite and in obedience to the will, the food is taken into the mouth, till passing through various stages in divers organs it is converted into a nutritive fluid, fit to replenish the waste of the system. How eagerly is it seized upon by the muscles of the jaws, and subjected to the action of the teeth, each formed for its peculiar function of cutting, tearing, or grinding the food; while the salivary glands excited into action pour out their specific fluid, which if not chemically concerned in digestion, at least gives the mass a consistence suitable for deglutition. This being accomplished, see how another set of muscles with harmonious action seize upon it, and carry it backward into the pharynx, the epiglottis like a faithful warder shutting down upon the glottis with instinctive accuracy at the moment of transit, lest a particle fall into the trachea. How the pharynx acting as a funnel, conducts the now masticated and insalivated food into the œsophagus, where, by the combined action of two sets of muscular fibres, it is pushed onward to the stomach; how immediately upon its reception, or perhaps a moment before, in anticipation of its coming, the

secreting follicles of this organ supply the gastric juice, which is thoroughly commingled with the mass by the trituration of interlacing fibres, producing mechanical and chemical changes by means of which the crude aliment is converted into chyme. This stage being completed, how does the pyloric valve, hitherto closed against the premature escape of undigested matters, with almost intelligent discrimination, open the door of egress to such portions of the food as are prepared for further changes. As it passes into the small intestines, how do the liver and pancreas, informed of its arrival, send forward in suitable channels their peculiar secretions, to perform their appropriate and necessary part in the digestive process, converting the chyme into chyle, which being greedily taken up by the lacteals, is carried into the mesenteric glands for some secret purpose, no doubt essential to its perfection—thence being conveyed into the broad channel of the thoracic duct, and emptied into the two great veins of the body at their junction—thus constantly supplying to the impoverished blood fresh elements of nutrition and life.

Now, my dear doctor, as we have gone over

together this oft-trodden ground, reviewing the complex and elaborate mechanism by which the crudest and coarsest articles of diet are transmuted into the pabulum of life, does not the conclusion seem inevitable that none but the Infinite could have contrived it, none but He could have continued it in successful operation?

But let us go a little further, and follow this nutritive fluid to the heart, where entering the right auricle it is sent through the pulmonary arteries to the lungs, and by means of minute capillary vessels is brought in contact with the atmosphere in the air-cells, imbibing from it the oxygen which is its life, and yielding to it the carbon which has been evolved in the various vital processes. As we follow the now regenerated blood, returning through the pulmonary veins to the left side of the heart, whence by the powerful contraction of this muscle it is forced into the aorta, the delicate valves opening spontaneously for its outflow, and closing as suddenly against regurgitation; as we thence trace it on through the capillaries to the various organs, where by the peculiar alchemy of each its appropriate secretion is



eliminated, forming from the same fluid diverse compounds, some to play their part in the economy of life, some to be cast out of the system as no longer of use: as with scientific eye we follow these phenomena, tracing their dependence and watching their results, can we fail to recognize a transcendent wisdom in design, skill in execution, and mystery in action, which proclaim most emphatically that we are fearfully and wonderfully made?

So alike of all the organs and functions of the body and mind. Do they not in their exquisite structure, and perfect adaptation to their several offices, imply superhuman power and wisdom, and constrain us to say of the human frame, "Truly

"The hand that made it is divine?"

Admitting then as we must the utter incapacity of human ingenuity to contrive such a complex system, and to adjust its harmonies, are we not shut up to this alternative: to recognize wonderful effects without a cause, exquisite design without a designer—a position which science will surely discard as utterly unworthy—or else to accept the rational and

safe conclusion of a great First-cause, of an infinite and almighty Designer.

If you have gone with me thus far, and concede that we are the workmanship of God's hands, can you refuse the necessary inference that he is the controller of our bodies; that our lives are in his keeping; that he has alike the power and the right to do what he will with his own?

Perhaps you will say I am calling your attention to a very trite and threadbare subject. I know full well that the phenomena to which I have alluded are as familiar to you as household words, and for that very reason may awaken no consideration apart from their interest as physiological truths. May I not, however, ask you if you have ever followed them out to their legitimate consequences? Have you reflected upon them in connection with the great and paramount considerations to which I would fain call your attention?

With what pleasure do we look upon a noble steam-engine; admiring its beauty of construction, its irresistible power, the exquisite smoothness and precision of its movements, and the application of its force to the most valuable

results in manufactures and commerce. Well may we gaze upon it with wonder and delight, as an exhibition of the intellectual power of man, and render due homage to the skilful machinist whose handiwork it is. Should we not much more admire and reverence Him who imparted to man this wonderful skill; yea, who gave him his very existence, and who sustains in action within his frame from day to day and year to year, from the cradle to the grave, machinery contrived with a skill which no human ingenuity can approach? In the one case we pay a just tribute to the genius of man. Why should we in the other case fail to render adoration and praise to the infinite God?

Being constrained then to acknowledge him as the Author of our being, and hence as the Arbiter of our destinies, is it not the part of wisdom to seek his approbation, and strive to secure "His favor which is life, and His loving-kindness which is better than life?" Is it not superlative folly to be willing to live "without God and without hope in the world," when we might have him for our Father and Friend? He offers to stand in this tender relation to us upon the simple conditions that we believe in

him, love him, and keep his commandments. Are not these, my dear doctor, easy and just conditions? Would you regard them as hard stipulations to impose upon your child, that he might secure your favor? Would you consider them rigorous exactions of a sovereign from his subjects? Why then withhold your faith, love, and obedience from God, who is not only our Father and Sovereign, but our Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor?

## LETTER II.

## RELIGION IN PROFESSIONAL DUTIES.

MY DEAR DOCTOR—In my last letter I sought to present to your mind your obligation to be a religious man, arising from the very character of your studies, which, as they unfold the organization of God's highest work, should naturally lead the mind to the contemplation of the great Creator himself. Permit me now to call your attention to a second reason why as a physician you should be a Christian ; namely, *because you are the constant witness of pain, sorrow, sickness, and death.*

The ordinary avocations of life have a tendency to divert men's thoughts from the contemplation of death and eternity. The lawyer, the merchant, the mechanic, and the laborer may plead with some semblance of plausibility the cares and perplexities of their several stations, as an excuse for neglecting the interests of the future life. But the physician can enter no such plea. On the contrary, the daily experience of his life is a constant exhortation to

place not his dependence upon earthly and temporal things. Every pain he is summoned to alleviate, every case of sickness which calls for his aid, every sorrow which demands his sympathy, every fatal malady which baffles his skill, each and all proclaim the unwelcome truth, the mortality of the race: each reiterates the solemn utterance of revelation, that no degree of physical strength, no share of worldly wealth, no amount of prosperity or fame, afford any security against the inevitable ills of life. All combined cannot screen the body from suffering, or the soul from anguish. Neither the elastic vigor of youth, nor the stalwart strength of manhood, can interpose any shield against the arrow of death.

Surely if any one needs the support of a Christian hope, it is he whose sad daily observation corroborates the truth of Scripture, that "all flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand for ever."

Men are ready enough to admit the general axiom of the uncertainty of life, the instability of health, and the insecurity of earthly joys.

But practically, each for himself claims exemption from the general doom. The incontrovertible proposition that *all* must die, is readily admitted ; but how slowly and reluctantly does each realize the truth, *I* too must die. This body so curiously formed, the object of so much solicitude and watchfulness, for the pampering of which I have toiled night and day, ever inquiring, "What shall I eat, what shall I drink, and wherewithal shall I be clothed?" exploring all countries and climes for the means of gratifying its appetites, and for the promotion of its comfort levying contributions from all the kingdoms of nature—this body which I have guarded so carefully from exposure, for the health of which I have swallowed nauseous draughts, consulted the most skilful physicians, and perhaps have forsaken home and friends for the healing influences of travel and salubrious air—this fondly cherished body, the object of so much thought and pride and hope and apprehension, must be laid aside. These senses, the avenues of so many delights, must cease their office: the eye no longer delight itself in seeing, nor the ear in hearing; the brain no longer serve as the instrument of

thought, the pulses no longer throb with emotion. All this mortal part of my being must be laid in the grave, to await the resurrection of the last day. Worldly men in general are so engrossed by things of the present life, so rapidly swept along in the current of passing events, they cannot take time to contemplate these painful realities. But you and I, my dear doctor, see much in our daily walk to remind us that one event happeneth to all. None are overlooked by death. He may delay his coming for many years, till increasing infirmities crave his approach, or he may come unwelcomed in the full flush of health. He may wait to extinguish with gentle hand the flame already flickering in the socket, or he may quench the tiny spark just kindling into life.

Behold the infant of a few months, whose birth has so recently brought joy into the household, gladdening a mother's heart, awakening a father's pride, a precious bond of union between husband and wife. How do their fond hearts swell with emotions of delight as they look upon this new object of affection. How delightedly do they watch its every motion, and try to anticipate its every want. How



confidently do they look forward to its gradual development, and dwell upon the happiness in store for them. How eagerly do they note the first smile which lights up the little face, the first token of recognition, the first springing germ of thought, every exhibition of will, every manifestation of expanding intellect. How proudly do they boast of its little accomplishments, and glory in its precocity. As they commune together of its progress from infancy to childhood, from childhood to youth, from youth to manhood, how fondly do they cast the horoscope of its future, with parental astrology noting only the glowing planets which betoken prosperity and peace, overlooking entirely the dark, shadowy objects which lie forebodingly between. Alas, how soon, in many cases, are they undeceived. How quickly do their flattering visions give place to sad realities. That sparkling brilliancy proves to be but the flashing of a meteor which is to sink in gloom. That boasted precocity is but the indication that the seeds of disease are germinating in the preternaturally excited brain. . You are called to witness the rapid advance of a disease beyond your reach; and

as your countenance betrays the sentence your lips refuse to utter, the young mother's heart sinks within her. With yearning tenderness she hangs over her babe, refusing to admit the possibility that death can stand thus at the very threshold of life. How importunately does she pray that her little one may be spared. But her heavenly Father mercifully refuses her petition. He transfers her treasure from earth to heaven, that it may be safe from the evil to come—that the precious bud, shielded from the harsh and blighting influences of the world, may expand into the perfect flower, and exhale its fragrance for ever in the paradise of God. If she can by faith hear the Saviour's voice saying, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven," then she can respond, though with bleeding heart and sobbing voice, "Even so, Lord; for so it seemeth good in thy sight." But if she has no hope beyond the present life, then indeed has her light gone out in impenetrable darkness, and the rebellion of her heart adding tenfold to her anguish, well may she cry out, "There is no sorrow like unto my sorrow." Now, my dear doctor, let

me ask you, unless you know by experience the fulness and preciousness of the love of Jesus, what can you do for that sorrowing mother? Words of sympathy are grateful and soothing, but they cannot bind up the broken heart. She needs to be led to Him "who doth not willingly afflict nor grieve the children of men," who alone can turn her sorrow into joy, and make her realize that her light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work out for her "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Such are the scenes through which you must pass, every year of your life. Delightful indeed were our vocation could we alleviate all suffering, and heal all diseases; but alas, "death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." God may have blessed your efforts time and again in restoring a patient to health, yet his period of probation sooner or later will run out. Then human skill will be unavailing. Remedies hitherto efficacious will fail of their effect. Grown confident by past success, you still persevere. Baffled with one remedy, you fly to another. Defeated in all your efforts, further counsel is called. Hoping against hope, new measures are tried, to be alike un-

successful, till your unseen and powerful antagonist, who from the first has been thwarting your plans, reveals himself in all his terrors as man's last enemy, over whom there is but one victor, Christ the Lord.

But it is not bereavement alone in which your sympathies are elicited. You are, from your intimate relation to your patients, the witness of other sorrows, oft-times worse than death. How often does the penetrating physician detect in the wasting health and strength of a mother or a wife, a cause lying concealed in the heart, which unless removed or mitigated will assuredly render all his skill nugatory and vain. With what cautious tenderness does he draw out from that heart the sad story of its wrongs and woes. Were not the physician's lips sealed with more than masonic fidelity, what tales of neglect and wrong, and petty tyranny more cruel than the inquisition, could be revealed, to the utter shame and disgrace of men whose outward bearing in society gives no evidence of their hypocrisy, but who abusing their power as husbands, crush out every spark of joy and hope from the trusting hearts of those whom they solemnly vowed to love

and honor and cherish. As the physician carefully opens this sealed fountain of grief, how does his soul burn with indignation against the shameless tyrant, and throb with sympathy toward the hopeless victim of wrongs for which the law offers no redress, who with undeserved and unrequited generosity covers up from the public eye the tyranny of her oppressor, shielding him from the infamy he so richly merits, defending him from the insinuations of suspecting friends, and even reluctantly answering the searching questions of her medical adviser, who with no motives of idle curiosity is trying to find the hidden spring whence issues this troubled stream. How does he long to dry up that fountain of bitterness, to pour oil into those deep festering wounds. Alas, no human hand can "minister to a mind *thus* diseased, nor pluck *such* rooted sorrow from the brain." If he is a Christian he can tell the sufferer of the Balm in Gilead, and point her to the great Physician there; to whom if she come in childlike faith and trust, He will either remove her sorrow, or make it fruitful of spiritual joys, which the world is alike impotent to give or to take away.

But there is another domestic sorrow which falls under the observation of the physician, still more common, if not more pungent, which eats like fire into a parent's heart, drying up and consuming all its joys. I mean the disobedience and ingratitude of a child: perhaps the child of many prayers and fondest hopes, at whose birth a mother's heart leaped for joy, over whose cradle she hung with delight, her watchings by night and unceasing care by day amply repaid by the dimpling smile and innocent prattle of her babe.

With what fond expectation did she note all his winning ways, greet every opening faculty, and treasure all his little sayings in her heart. As he grew up into childhood and youth, how cheerfully she sacrificed herself for his enjoyment, how patiently she endured all his waywardness, how joyfully she welcomed the least token of filial affection, how hopefully she regarded every promise of manly virtue. Perhaps she early consecrated him to God, taught his infant lips to pray, and bore him in her own heart to the throne of grace. But alas, how much more naturally and easily do our depraved hearts gravitate to earth, than soar to heaven.

As he grows beyond a mother's constant vigilance, wicked companions lure him, and the temptations of the world beset his path. In spite of all her remonstrances, all her prayers and tears, she sees him treading in the broad road which leadeth to destruction. Under the lash of remorse, he from time to time resolves upon amendment; but the upbraidings of conscience are soon stifled, and good resolutions, often broken, cease to be made. He relaxes at last all effort, lies upon his oars, and floats with ever-accelerating swiftness down the turbid current of iniquity, till he plunges into hopeless ruin, a double wreck—the destroyer of his own soul, and of all a fond mother's hopes. That once pure and innocent brow, so often impressed with her maternal kiss, is now stamped with guilt. That beaming smile is changed unto the coarse laugh of ribaldry. That lisping tongue is loaded with blasphemies. Perhaps under the influence of intoxication, he even pours out curses upon that mother who would gladly have laid down her life for her son.

“Oh how sharper than a serpent's tooth,  
To have a thankless child.”

What human skill can extract the venom from such a wound? No probe can reach it; no salve can neutralize its virulence. It is working with deadly subtilty in the very heart's blood, sapping the foundations of health and life. You can bear me witness, dear doctor, that this is no fancy sketch. Every physician of long practice, especially in our large cities, will recognize it as a faithful portrait of what he has himself seen. Have you not in such circumstances deeply lamented that you had no antidote for the soul's poison? Vain indeed will be your efforts to stay its blighting effects upon the bodily health, unless you can remove the cause: unless with words made eloquent with the spirit of Christ, and winged by faith and prayer, you can pierce as with an arrow the steeled heart of that obdurate son; or with heaven-imparted love and wisdom, can lead that broken-hearted mother to Jesus. But how can you lead, if you have not learned the way? How can you suggest a remedy of whose efficacy you have not made trial?

May I not, in view of all these sorrows and trials you are compelled to encounter, and which so feelingly appeal to you for your sym-



pathy, your counsel, and your aid, may I not entreat you to acquaint yourself personally with the only true source of consolation and support? Go to the only fountain whence flow the pure, living waters of peace and joy, even Jesus Christ the Lord. He invites you to come to him. He is eager to welcome you.

“Yes, whosoever will,  
Oh let him freely come,  
And freely drink the stream of life;  
’Tis Jesus bids him come.”

## LETTER III.

## RELIGION IN PROFESSIONAL TRIALS.

MY DEAR DOCTOR—In my last letter I endeavored to recall to your mind some of the sorrows which the physician in the ordinary discharge of his professional duties is compelled to witness, and urged the importance of his being able to point the sufferer to the only source of hope and consolation, even to the Lamb of God, who not only taketh away the sin of the world, but also imparteth abundant grace to endure the many trials and sufferings which befall the race in consequence of sin. But not only is the physician the sad witness of sorrow with which the stranger intermeddeth not, he has also to *endure personal trials peculiar to his vocation*, which, though difficult for the community to appreciate, nevertheless bear upon him with crushing weight, under the pressure of which his own unaided strength proves but a broken reed.

In the first place, his life is one of incessant toil and weariness. Most men have their stated

hours of business, and when those hours are past, can sit down in calm security to enjoy their books, their families, or the society of friends. But the physician has no time that he can call his own. If he seeks relaxation in a ride to the country, or in spending a social evening with a friend, he does it with the feeling of a truant school-boy. His pleasure is alloyed by the thought that some one of his patients may be requiring his service, and that an unwelcome summons will greet his return to his home. Neither do his labors terminate at the hour of rest. Whatever the cares and perplexities which harass the lawyer, the merchant, and the mechanic during the day, when night comes they are buried in the blessed forgetfulness of sleep. But to the physician night brings no respite. After a day of great fatigue of body, and, what is a hundred-fold worse, of intense anxiety of mind, when exhausted nature demands repose, he is often compelled to extend his watchings into the night, and thus suffer sooner or later in his own broken health the inevitable penalty of violating nature's laws. As he traverses the deserted streets at night, with a sense of weariness which makes him

covet the curb-stone as a pillow; or as he sits by the bed-side of the sick, perhaps the dying, watching the feeble respiration or counting the ebbing pulse, how often does he secretly ask himself, Why did I choose so arduous a life? How often does he inwardly exclaim, Would that I were a hewer of wood or a drawer of water, that I might escape these responsibilities, or at least that I might for a time lose the remembrance of my cares in the oblivion of slumber. Such are sometimes the lamentations even of the Christian physician, sustained though he is by the comforting thought that his lot is not of chance, but of divine appointment—that with God are the issues of life and of death, and that if he gives his best talents and attainments and his watchful care to the case, he has done all that is required of him, and he may calmly leave the result to Him who doeth all things well, and who will make *all* things, even professional cares and disappointments and failures, work together for his good. If such a one even is occasionally betrayed into the folly and wickedness of murmuring at the hardships of his lot, how bitter must be the reflections of him who has no arm

upon which he can lean ; who is obliged to fall back upon his own poor resources for support, and bear his burden alone and unaided. As he realizes the sinking condition of his patient and the inadequacy of science and human skill to cope with the King of Terrors, what can he do but fold his hands in despondency, and exclaim, Surely "I have spent my strength for naught, and my labor for that which satisfieth not?"

And in the midst of such depressing circumstances, the physician not only has to bear his own burden, but in some measure that of the friends and relatives of the patient. When after years of faithful and devoted attention he has gained the confidence of those he attends, with what solicitude do they watch his countenance and note his words, drawing therefrom inferences of good or evil. How is his heart often torn when conscientiously compelled to give an unfavorable opinion. When the stricken wife or anxious mother, with trembling accents or inquiring look, asks the probable termination of the case, upon the issue of which hangs all her hope, how can he find courage to utter the fatal prognosis, and break the heart

he knows not how to heal? How can he speak the words "no hope," unless with true Christian confidence he can point to hope beyond the grave—unless he can lead the bereaved one to Him who alone can bring light out of darkness, and mid tears of anguish can spread the bow of promise, filling the trusting heart with peace which passeth understanding?

But the physician has another trial which few suspect, but which often cuts deep into his soul, namely, the failure of others to appreciate his feelings. Few seem to have any adequate conception of the threefold suffering he endures in his sympathy with afflicted friends, in his sense of responsibility, and often in his personal loss, perhaps of one to whom he had become strongly attached. Most gratefully do I record one exceptional case. I had attended the young daughter of Mrs. B——, and had given the case my best attention, but was not aware of manifesting more than usual solicitude. It so happened that I was at the bedside at the dying hour, and when it was announced that all was over, the young mother laid her hand upon my shoulder, and said in a tone of tenderest sympathy, "I am so sorry for you, doctor." She

then left the room, and gave vent to the agony of her own bursting heart. No one but a physician can fully appreciate so generous, so unselfish an act. Nearly twenty years have elapsed since the occurrence, but those kind words linger like the strains of sweet music in my memory. Never to my dying day shall I forget them, or cease to be grateful to the noble heart that uttered them. But such instances are indeed few and far between. The physician may have entered the sick-room day after day for weeks and months, bringing his best gifts of skill and knowledge, the results of careful study and of anxious thought, soothing when he could not heal, alleviating suffering which he could not avert, and often when his own spirit was oppressed, greeting his patient with a cheering smile and enlivening him with a pleasant word. At length, however, when all his efforts have proved unavailing, and the seal of death is set, he is allowed to take his leave almost unheeded. Oh how does he yearn for sympathy himself! He would not obtrude his grief; nevertheless he wishes it was realized that he too is bereaved. With what a sad feeling of isolation does he turn away from the

house of mourning, in which he is and has a right to be a mourner.

Am I, dear doctor, relating your own sad experience? Have I touched a chord which has often vibrated in your own heart? Yes, I am confident I have; for "as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." Now if you are not a Christian, where will you find comfort in circumstances like these? You may go away moralizing upon the selfishness of human nature. You may sternly resolve that henceforward you will faithfully but stoically perform your duty, without permitting your feelings to become so deeply enlisted. But this were a vain resolve. Even if practicable, it would be most unwise. Strive not to deaden your sensibilities. There is enough in life to chill them without your voluntary coöperation. Do not seek to shut out human sympathies from your heart, but rather cherish and cultivate them, for they are springs of joy, as well as of sorrow. Turn away from the broken and empty cisterns of earthly comfort, to Him who is the unfailing fountain of all consolation, "a very present help in trouble;" who is interested in our lighter as well as in our heavier



trials; whose ear is ever open to our prayer, whose heart is ever touched with our necessities.

But the physician is subject to many minor trials, which though comparatively trivial swell in the aggregate into proportions which add not a little to the burden of his professional life. I do not allude to such as are unavoidable, or incidental to all the walks of life, but to such as are peculiar to our profession, and which by a little consideration on the part of our patients might be avoided. For instance, how frequently must he forego his regular meal with his family, in obedience to an imperative summons, which might just as well have come an hour earlier or later. How often are his domestic and social enjoyments broken in upon by untimely and unnecessary calls. How often does a message reach him just as he has retired to rest, which might have been sent an hour or two sooner, and not unfrequently might, without the least disadvantage, have been withheld till morning. Such annoyances are of course sometimes unavoidable, and I acknowledge with gratitude that many persons are very considerate, striving to spare their physician

in every possible way consistent with duty to the sick, which of course must be the paramount consideration. Too many, however, are entirely thoughtless on the subject; regarding the physician as a public servant, subject to their beck and call, whose comfort and convenience they are under no obligation to consider.

But not only does he suffer from the inconsiderateness of some of his patients, he is also the victim of their fickleness. Some persons change their physician with the same capriciousness with which they change their baker or grocer. After he has by careful observation—perhaps during a period of several years—acquired a thorough knowledge of the constitution, temperament, and morbid tendencies of the various members of a family, by means of which he has become preëminently qualified successfully to combat their diseases, and what is still more valuable, to give counsels for each by which the constitution may be invigorated, and abnormal tendencies counteracted: when in addition to this he has formed a strong attachment to the family, which gives him not merely a professional but a personal interest in all that concerns them, he finds

himself suddenly and most unexpectedly dismissed, and another substituted in his place, the superiority of whose claim is based upon the consideration that he lives a few doors nearer, or that he sends smaller bills, or that he is family physician of a particular acquaintance or neighbor. Perhaps his place may be filled by an empiric, who is either deluded himself or plays upon the credulity of his patients with some novel system of practice, which ignores alike the accumulated science and the rich experience of ages; or what is most aggravating of all, he may be supplanted by one bearing the title of a professional brother, who, destitute alike of honor, delicacy, or principle, goes about vaunting his own cures, heralding his own fame, and enviously decrying the well-earned reputation of his brethren.

The ingratitude to which even the most popular and most favored physicians are liable is manifested in various other forms. Perhaps after years of successful practice in a family, by which he has earned and as he fondly thought won their unswerving confidence and affection, he finds all obliterated by the first unsuccessful case, and he is held responsible for the fatal

termination, as though he were the arbiter of life and death, and as if the universal sentence had not gone forth, "Thou shalt surely die."

In the matter of pecuniary compensation for his services, the physician is subjected to no small amount of annoyance and mortification. After a season of universal sickness in a household, by which his time, his energies, and his sympathies have been severely taxed—sickness which has engrossed his thoughts by day, and trenched deeply upon his hours of rest, the bill is sent in. It covers only the absolutely necessary visits, and a reasonable charge for attendance at night. No charge is included for visits made to relieve his own anxiety, or for wear and tear of mind and heart, for which no amount of money could compensate, and which he cheerfully rendered, craving no reward beyond a generous appreciation of his services. The money is sent without comment. He hears of no objection to the bill. No kindly interview is sought to ask an explanation of the unusual amount. The first intimation he has of dissatisfaction is the averted face and cold look, which tell him plainer than words that he has committed the unpardonable sin. Another phy-

sician is henceforth employed in his stead. Unwilling perhaps to acknowledge publicly a parsimonious motive, no intimation is given of the nature of the offence, but the unjust impression is allowed to go forth that confidence in his skill is lost; and thus a double wrong is inflicted upon one who has ever been a faithful, skilful, conscientious friend and physician.

Another annoyance of quite common occurrence, is neglect on the part of some to pay a bill, the justice and reasonableness of which are freely acknowledged, upon the ground that they are not able to meet it. Now very rarely is this a justifiable plea, for seldom is a medical bill presented to a patient who is not able to pay. No class of men render so much gratuitous service as physicians; and they do it without ostentation, cheerfully and gladly. Not only to the destitute and suffering, but to widows and others in reduced circumstances or of limited means, who are struggling to maintain a respectable appearance amid difficulties and embarrassments, oftentimes not more formidable than he himself has to contend with. Against many of these no charge whatever appears in his ledger; while to others—with

whom he has opened an account, hoping they might be able to pay—no bill is sent; and all that appears upon the credit side of a long column of charges is, “Cancelled from inability to pay.” Of this class of persons I do not speak. God is their banker, and we ask no better security. Most welcome are they to our gratuitous services. But I am sorry to say there are not a few who plead inability to pay the doctor’s bill, whose tables groan under the weight of delicacies such as their physician cannot afford; whose wives and daughters flaunt in silks and laces, while *his* family are obliged to forego many of the comforts of life. This is by no means an ideal picture. Some, I doubt not, will trace in it their own lineaments. What physician has not been invited to sumptuous entertainments by those who have neglected to pay his bill on the plea of inability, and yet continue unblushingly to exact his service? I would not accuse such of intentional affront. I verily believe they have persuaded themselves that medical bills and church taxes should only be paid when it can be done without curtailment of the luxuries and superfluities of life. Now these little vexations may seem

unworthy the name of trials. Certainly each by itself is of small moment, but superadded to the heavier sorrows, they make an aggregate hard to bear. "It is the last straw which breaks the camel's back." It is the last ounce which crushes the viaduct over which heavily loaded trains have been safely transported. So he who has stood up manfully under the inevitable burden of anxieties and responsibilities for which he has nerved himself, yields at last despondingly to a comparatively trivial but unlooked for neglect or wrong.

I need not ask you, my dear doctor, if I have drawn a faithful picture of your experience. I am sure I have. For no physician of long and extensive practice can have failed to encounter some, if not all the evils, great and small, which I have depicted. Do you not sometimes feel almost disheartened under the accumulated weight, and exclaim, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Permit me to tell you who is sufficient for them, who is equal to every emergency. It is he "whose God is the Lord;" who has "the God of Jacob" for his refuge. Nothing is so great that the Almighty cannot grasp it; nothing is so little as to be beneath His

notice. "He ruleth the raging of the sea," yet "He scattereth the hoar frost like ashes." "He stretcheth out the heavens like a curtain," yet he condescendeth to clothe the lily of the field. Will you not then commit yourself, with all your interests and all your troubles, to Him who will "make darkness light, and rough places smooth." Listen to his own kind words of promise and assurance to those who come to him with filial trust and affection: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour." Why then try to grope your way alone and unaided? Lean upon His arm, and he will give you grace to say,

"Let the wind blow and billows roll,  
Hope is the anchor of my soul;  
It fastens on a land unknown,  
And moors me to my Father's throne."



## LETTER IV.

## OPPORTUNITIES TO LEAD TO CHRIST.

MY DEAR DOCTOR—In urging upon you an additional motive which should constrain you to be a religious man, I appeal to your more generous feelings; and would press the subject upon you not merely because you need the support which religion alone can impart, but because *as a physician you have unequalled opportunities of winning others to Christ*. The clergyman is seldom summoned to a sick man till the case is pronounced one of imminent danger. So long as there is a reasonable prospect of recovery, his presence is generally considered unnecessary and ill-timed, and his proffered visits are often declined, lest they should alarm and agitate the patient. I believe it to be a mistaken apprehension. So far from the counsels and prayers of a judicious minister being injurious, I have uniformly observed their effect to be soothing, tranquillizing, and in all respects beneficial. The popular impression, however, is otherwise, and in consequence the

clergyman is usually sent for only when the faculties of the dying man are obscured—when he is hardly capable of appreciating his condition, corporeally or spiritually, and the exhortations and prayers of the minister of God fall upon his dull ear and duller intellect unheeded and unfelt. How deeply painful is it to the conscientious and pious physician to be the witness of such interviews. With what emotions of self-condemnation, as a partaker in the deception, does he see deluded friends hanging with eager hope upon replies to leading questions, even the meaning of which the sick man does not comprehend. But even when the clergyman is called at an earlier period of the case, he labors under many disadvantages. His visit is looked upon as somewhat formal and professional; his counsels and prayers are too often regarded as perfunctory, and are received and responded to by the patient in a corresponding spirit. Having been sent for, and his visits being only occasional, it is deemed best to receive him, however inopportune the moment, however unfavorable the condition of the sick man. He may have been wearied by company or by conversation already. He may be under

the temporary disturbing influence of remedies, or about falling into much-needed repose ; or his mind may chance to be for the time unusually dull and lethargic, so that much of the advantage of the visit is lost. The clergyman, bent on fulfilling his sacred office, and incapable of fully appreciating the physical condition of the patient, or fearful lest amid the manifold demands upon his time, he may not be able to repeat his visit for several days, avails himself of the opportunity, unfavorable though it be, and performs his solemn duty unsatisfactorily to himself, and unprofitably to the sick. Herein the Christian physician has greatly the advantage. Seeing the patient once or twice daily, he can judge correctly when he is in a condition to be approached successfully ; can seize the propitious moment, and with a word fitly spoken, can turn each opportunity to good account. If he really have the eternal welfare of his patient at heart, from the fulness of his heart his mouth will speak—speak seasonably, tenderly, and effectually. Through intimate association with his patient, he has learned all his peculiarities of character, so that he can avoid as far as possible coming in conflict with mental idi-

osyneraeies and prejudices, which would place him in a state of antagonism to the truth. Thus he can speak a word in season, and perhaps plant an arrow of conviction in the heart which to the anticipated exhortation of the elergyman would be closed as by a corselet of steel. If then, my dear doctor, we have such rare opportunities of doing good to the souls of our patients, great are our responsibilities, and proportionably heavy will be our condemnation if we fail to improve them ; for "to whom much is given, of him also shall much be required." To discharge such obligations faithfully, do we not need divine instruction? No amount of learning, no attainments in science alone, can qualify us to teach the simplest lesson in the school of Christ. We must first sit ourselves as little children at the Saviour's feet, and learn of Him who was "meek and lowly of heart," before we can be prepared to impart to another the first step in the way of life. Unless we have felt the burden of our own sin, how can we show our erring brother what it is that is pressing so sorely upon him? Unless we have a keen perception of the corruption of our own heart, how can we adjust the mirror in which

he may see reflected his own sinfulness? Unless we have experienced the love of Christ, how can we lead another to that exhaustless fountain of purity and peace? As then you would benefit the soul as well as the body of your patient ; as you would afford him patience under suffering, resignation in sickness, triumph in death, be yourself a Christian, that you may "testify that you do know," and that your words may breathe the fervor of a renewed and sanctified heart.

But there is another most pressing reason, and the last I shall urge, why the physician should be a Christian. It is that he too must die. After all he may have accomplished by assiduity and skill in ameliorating the sufferings and healing the sickness of others, the time must inevitably come sooner or later when the physician must become the patient ; and he who in behalf of others has so long contended against the king of terrors, must now yield himself a victim to his universal sway. His perceptions blunted, his reasoning powers obscured, and his judgment perverted ; his resolution failing with the failing strength of the body, he can no longer be trusted with the

management of his case. Painful and humiliating though it be, he must yield his own opinions, forego his own judgment, and surrender himself unreservedly into the hands of another. Accustomed to direct and control others, he must now submit to be directed and controlled himself. In these respects he is reduced to the level of ordinary patients; in other respects he labors under great comparative disadvantages. Most sick persons, confiding in the skill of their medical adviser, wisely commit their case with all its responsibilities to him. Ignorant themselves of the import of symptoms, they think only of present suffering and inconvenience, entertaining no apprehension so long as the smiling face and cheering words of their physician promise ultimate recovery. No such blind and happy acquiescence, however, gives serenity to the sick-bed of the physician. He cannot, if he would, throw off the consideration of his own case, or avoid speculating upon his chances of restoration. Knowing full well the significance of symptoms as the outward and palpable manifestations of latent mischief within, he finds himself trying to penetrate the rationale of his condition, and

ever laboring—though with crippled faculties and diminished capacity—to trace effects to their ultimate causes, and to follow out present phenomena to their probable final results. With excited brain he follows with more or less accuracy each link in the chain of consequences, till with dismay he finds the last held firmly in the grasp of death. Do you say, dear doctor, I have drawn a sad and gloomy picture? I am aware I have. But I have not deepened the shadows with any false coloring. Be assured it is a true and faithful forecasting of what you and I, unless cut off by sudden death, must one day realize in our own personal experience. How pertinent then the question, Are we prepared for such an exigency? Are we quite ready for a sudden snapping of the cords of life, a sudden summons to our final account? Or have we even resolution to endure the sufferings of a protracted illness, with all its privation of enjoyment, and all its positive pain; with all its trials of temper, all its circumstances of depression; through wearisome days and restless nights, hopeless and powerless, watching the steady outflow of the ebbing tide of life? Few persons can receive the announcement

that they are laboring under a rapidly fatal disease without a shudder, and an involuntary shrinking back as from the verge of a frightful chasm they would fain avoid. If death be indeed inevitable, they would they might descend into the dark valley by slow and successive steps. But to the physician who appreciates the full meaning of a lingering death, with all its dread accompaniments of wasting and suffering of body, with depression, weariness, and often impatience and fretfulness of spirit, nothing seems so appalling as this unequal, hopeless, protracted conflict, in which he is to be vanquished at last by the slow consuming of the powers of life. One or the other of these alternatives we must encounter. What folly then to try to banish it from our thoughts. Let us rather manfully contemplate an event which we cannot escape, and strive to discover if there is no way by which it can be stripped of its gloom and terror; no way by which death may be robbed of its sting, and the grave of its victory. What saith the Scripture? "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors." "The sting of death is sin, and the



strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." We are not required to achieve the victory for ourselves; Jesus hath won it for us. We have only to become his faithful disciples, and we shall share his triumph. By his grace we shall be able to meet death calmly and peacefully, and even welcome his approach. We shall be able joyfully to repeat the beautiful lines:

"One sweetly solemn thought comes to me o'er and  
o'er,

I'm nearer home to-day than I ever have been before:  
Nearer my Father's house, where the many mansions  
be;

Nearer the great white throne, nearer the jasper sea;  
Nearer that bound of life where we lay our burden  
down;

Nearer leaving the cross, nearer gaining the crown."

## LETTER V.

## RELIGION IN SICKNESS AND DEATH.

MY DEAR DOCTOR—In my last letter I endeavored to lead your mind to the personal consideration of death as man's last enemy, and to the means of triumphing over him, namely, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Do you ask how you can make sure of the blessedness of dying in the Lord? The answer is plain, *by living to the Lord*. There is no doubt that men of science and learning miss the way of life because of its very simplicity. They can hardly credit the declaration of the apostle, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Would you ask easier conditions? No, you would rather they were more difficult. As the foolish adventurer in pursuit of wealth, sacrificing health and comfort, home

and friends, explores distant lands, and digs deep into the bowels of the earth, hoping to gather scattered grains of gold, overlooking entirely the treasures of the soil under his feet, which if tilled with one half the labor would reward him with golden harvests; so foolish, self-sufficient man seeking salvation, refuses the gospel terms: "Believe, and thou shalt be saved;" "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." If it required great research and study to be a Christian, if it involved wearisome pilgrimages and cruel penances and self-inflictions, you think you would not hesitate. But to be saved by merely accepting mercy—to be saved like a drowning man by merely seizing the hand stretched out for your rescue, this cannot be. As the proud Syrian of old scorned to be cleansed of his leprosy by simply washing in Jordan, and went away angry because the prophet did not call on the name of the Lord, and strike his hand over the place, and with a miracle recover him; so men now wait for some miraculous

intervention, some extraordinary manifestation of the Spirit, instead of yielding to the still small voice which whispers, "Look unto me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth." Do you say you cannot believe so great an end can be attained by such simple means; there must be some other way of salvation? Be assured, as God is true, this is the only way provided. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth;" and, "There is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved;" and he is not only willing, but anxious to save us; so anxious that he does not even wait for us to come to Him. He says—and Oh how gracious and full of meaning are the words—"Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

What does Christ say is the summing up of the whole law? "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself;" and again, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto

them." Have you perfectly obeyed these divine injunctions, both in the letter and the spirit? If you had, then you would be righteous; you would need no repentance, and no Saviour. If not, you have sinned against your heavenly Father. Do you at times feel the force and the perfect reasonableness of these commandments, and are you conscious that you have fallen far short of their requirements? Does your conscience upbraid you for your shortcomings? Have you an earnest desire for God's forgiveness, and for deliverance from sin? If you have these feelings, be assured they did not spring up spontaneously. It is Jesus knocking at the door of your heart. Listen to his persuasive voice: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and

whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

Can you listen to such gracious words and still remain passive? He says, "If any man hear my voice, *and open the door*, I will come in to him." He has knocked; he has spoken. Is it not your part to open the door? He will not force an entrance. Draw then the bolts of indifference, prejudice, or self-righteousness, which have so long barred his entrance. Throw wide open the door of your heart, saying, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." "I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities." "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified."

How joyfully will he respond to your petitions, and "come in to you, and sup with you, and you with Him." Do you say with the centurion of old, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof?" To feel your unworthiness constitutes your fitness: "He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Do you fear that so soon as he has gone out, and you have ceased to hear his voice, you

will forget his words and fall back into sin? Well might you fear if you were obliged to rely upon your own strength; but His strength is made perfect in your weakness. He will give you his Holy Spirit to guide and strengthen you: "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength." "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." "I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye." "I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." Will you not take him at his word? Just ask him to receive you as you are, with all your unworthiness. Say in the words of the hymn,

"Just as I am, without one plea  
Save that thy blood was shed for me,  
And that thou bidst me come to thee,  
Oh Lamb of God, I come.

\* Just as I am, and waiting not  
To rid my soul of one foul blot,  
To thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,  
Oh Lamb of God, I come."

Be assured you will not ask in vain. He will receive you gladly, wash away your sins, shield you in temptation, shed new radiance over every joy, gild every cloud of sorrow, comfort you in sickness, sustain you in the hour of death, and crown you with glory and immortality.



## LETTER VI.

## OBSTACLES AND TEMPTATIONS.

PERHAPS, my dear doctor, you will admit the force of what I have thus far advanced, and will say you would like to be a Christian, but that the unavoidable circumstances of your professional life allow you no opportunity to attend to spiritual things; and that were you to make a profession of religion, you fear you would not find time to fulfil the duties of your Christian calling. I know well there are many and great obstacles in your way; but they are by no means insurmountable. Nothing certainly is more indispensable to steady progress in the divine life, than regular and systematic habits of family and private devotion, setting apart stated hours for holding communion with God in the closet. I know too that perfect regularity in the discharge of these duties is out of the question, even to the physician who regards them as a precious privilege, and whose heart is set upon their faithful performance. An urgent summons in the morning may pre-

vent him from gathering his household around the domestic altar, to ask divine guidance and support in the duties, trials, and temptations of the day. Not unfrequently do his engrossing professional cares deprive him of his wonted season of private devotion, so that as he hurries on his errands of mercy, he has to rely upon ejaculatory prayer to secure that strength and wisdom which he would vainly seek from any earthly source, to enable him to discharge faithfully and successfully his arduous and responsible work. Even the Sabbath-day, set apart as a period of rest from secular pursuits and toils, is not a day of rest to him. Pain and sickness and death keep no Sabbath; and he who would contend against them, must sometimes forego much of the benefit of holy time. Nevertheless, if he appreciates the importance of religious duties, if he realizes the obligation of family worship, if he feels the imperative need of heavenly aid to arm him for the conflicts of the day, and to qualify him to wield successfully his professional skill, he will by early rising, by habits of punctuality cherished in himself and inculcated in his family, by systematic arrangement of the duties of each day,

and by gathering up the shreds of time that nothing be lost, generally be able to discharge his whole duty to the sick, without serious neglect of the paramount interests of his own soul and the souls of his household. Even the Sabbath may be in a great measure redeemed from secular pursuits, if the labors of the six days be so ordered that no work which can be compressed within them be postponed to the seventh.

I know there are many worthy, right-minded physicians, and some Christian physicians engaged in extensive practice, who aver that they cannot go to church, or attend to their private religious duties, without neglecting their patients. Now if such be the fact, is it not a most obvious duty to curtail the amount of their business till it shall no longer conflict with their higher obligations? But I do not speak without authority when I say, that the most extensive practitioners in our large cities, by great industry, system, and forethought, and by redeeming the odd moments of time, can ordinarily secure for themselves the most essential religious privileges, not only without detriment to their patients, but greatly to their benefit.

But if, on the other hand, the physician indulges in the too prevalent custom of late rising on the Lord's day; if after carefully examining his patients and making his prescriptions, he be drawn into pleasant and beguiling conversation in the sick-room, his time will slip away unheeded, and he will find himself occupied beyond the hour of public worship. If he manifests no reluctance to lose the services of the sanctuary, then indeed his Sunday labors, instead of being less, will be greater than on other days; for those who are not willing to surrender the hours of business and money-making even for the sake of health, and who have no regard for holy time, will make the Sabbath a convenient season to demand his services. Thus may he be betrayed into the habit of neglecting almost entirely the public ministrations of the church, pacifying his conscience with the salvo that his necessary professional obligations engross all his time and thoughts.

There is another temptation to which the medical man is exposed, which if not resisted will engross his few leisure hours, and effectually preclude the consideration of his immortal interests. Absorbed as he is most of the time

in scenes of suffering and distress, it is not strange he should seek recreation where life is exhibited in its gayer and more cheering phases; and that he should be tempted, when he can snatch a moment from his severe duties, to dissipate his cares in the exhilaration of convivial society, or in vicious amusements. If his taste be too refined for these grosser pleasures, he is at least in danger of being drawn into the circle of the giddy and irreligious, whose companionship, if not positively demoralizing like the theatre, drinking saloon, and gaming-table, tends much to unspiritualize the mind, and draw it off from the contemplation of higher objects. Far be it from me to condemn healthy, rational amusements. They are indispensable to all engaged in vocations which tax severely the mind and heart. As harp-strings ever unrelaxed cease to vibrate, so the intellectual powers always on the stretch lose their elasticity. Men therefore whose lives are earnest, must unbend or break. They must have frequent intervals of rest and relaxation, or pay the penalty of ruined health.

Those, however, who would run with diligence the heavenly race, must remember that "press-

ing toward the mark" is the immediate duty ; momentary loitering by the wayside, the needed refreshment. Only the Christian who is in the habit of introspection—who is ever watchful of himself, and jealous of the honor of his Saviour—fearful lest his affections should be weaned from heavenly things and fixed upon earthly things, can fully appreciate the damaging effect of free and unbridled indulgence in amusements in themselves innocent. As he goes from scenes of gayety to his closet, and with confused thoughts and whirling brain attempts to withdraw himself from the world and hold communion with his Father in heaven, he finds to his sorrow the wings of his faith drooping, his spiritual perceptions dull, his thoughts wandering, his relish for divine things blunted ; and he is made to feel the full force of the injunction, "Be not conformed to this world." "Whosoever loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him." If then the Christian who has had experience of heavenly joys, and some slight foretaste of the "peace which passeth understanding," learns to his dismay that the allurements of the world have a fascinating power over him—so that if instead of struggling

manfully against them with watching and prayer, he throws himself carelessly into their magic circle, he finds they tend to vitiate his taste for higher enjoyments—how dangerous must they be to him who has no antidote to their poisonous influence; who without shield or armor is vulnerable at every point. How easily may they steel his heart against salutary impressions, stifle the voice of conscience, and bar the doors of his soul against the Spirit of God, who often knocks in vain for admittance.

As then, my dear doctor, you would escape the snares which are spread for your feet; as you would be armed at all points for the conflicts of life; as you would be victorious in all your struggles, and have solace in all your cares and sorrows; as you would afford consolation and support to others; as you would be humble in prosperity, and hopeful in adversity; as you would be grateful in health, patient in sickness, and triumphant in death: in short, as you would have the “promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come,” consider these things. “Shun that which is evil. Cleave to that which is good.” “Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him

while he is near." "He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: He will also hear their cry, and will save them." "It shall come to pass, that before they call I will answer; and while they are yet speaking I will hear." "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Could language be framed to express more strongly Christ's willingness to receive all who come unto God by him? Will you not then test the sincerity of his offers of mercy?

"Oh make but trial of his love;  
Experience will decide,  
How blest are they, and only they,  
Who in his truth confide."



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